

VZCZCXRO8096
RR RUEHRG
DE RUEHBR #1406 3381623
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 041622Z DEC 09
FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0014
INFO RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
RUEHRG/AMCONSUL RECIFE 0008
RUEHRI/AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO
RUEHSO/AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

UNCLAS BRASILIA 001406

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS
SIPDIS
DEPT FOR OES/STC, ISN/CTR

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [TBIO](#) [KSCA](#) [BR](#)

SUBJECT: SYMPOSIUM ON BIOSECURITY AND DUAL USE RESEARCH ENCOURAGES
LATIN AMERICAN DIALOG ON AREA OF POLICY CONCERN

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¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. The First International Symposium on Biosecurity and Dual Use Research held in Brazil brought together Latin American experts and policymakers dealing with biosecurity. The conference highlighted the national security threats emerging from the advances in the biological sciences, and it underscored that the USG was a resource and partner for the region in addressing these new challenges. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) On September 21 the Brazilian National Biosafety Association (AnBio), with support from ISN/CTR's Biosecurity Engagement Program (BEP), held the First International Symposium on Biosecurity and Dual Use Research in Rio de Janeiro. This symposium was the first of its kind in Latin America, aimed at starting a conversation about the implications of dual use research on the growing topics of biosafety and biosecurity. The keynote speaker, AnBio President Dr. Leila Macedo Oda, stressed how the rapid growth in biological sciences is fueling a growing problem of biosecurity in the region. She said that many new avenues of research in the biological sciences have important implications for the advance of science and medicine, but they also raise the potential for dangerous misuse. She saw many parallel national security policy questions regarding advances in biological science to those connected with nuclear technology.

¶3. (SBU) Other speakers focused on specific aspects of the biosecurity and dual use dilemma. Their talks covered laboratory controls and issues related to policy design and implementation. USG speakers included representatives from the National Academies of Science and the Centers for Disease Control. Other speakers came from a diverse group of Latin American and European countries. Many of the participants and attendees praised Dr. Oda for her efforts to highlight this increasingly important issue and start a dialog that will help policymakers from throughout the region begin to grapple with the challenges that it presents.

¶4. (SBU) COMMENT. This symposium was important in bringing together Latin American experts and policymakers to discuss biosecurity, which is an area of growing concern. Through this meeting and the USG representation, the USG was able to highlight its value as a resource and partner in addressing issues of biosecurity. Further, the participants began to establish connections with counterparts in the region, helping to build a network of contacts and expanding the pool of expertise on which to

draw when grappling with biosecurity. END COMMENT.
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